A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH

AT

NORWICH,

On TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 1764:

Being the GUILD-DAY.

By JOHN GREENE, M. A.

Minister of ST. GEORGE'S, TOMBLAND,

IN NORWICH.

Published at the REQUEST of the CORPORATION.

NORWICH:

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NORWICH. *At a full Court of* MAYORALTY, *held the 20th of June, 1764:*

ORDERED, That JOHN PRESS, Eſq; and NOCKOLD THOMPSON, Eſq; be, and they are hereby appointed to wait upon the Rev. Mr. JOHN GREENE, to return him the Thanks of this Court, for his excellent Sermon preached before this Court on the 19th Inſtant, being the Day on which Mr. MAYOR was ſworn into his Office; and to requeſt him to print the ſame.

By the COURT,

WRIGHT.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

JOHN DERSLEY, Esq;

MAYOR,

THE

ALDERMEN, SHERIFFS,

AND

COMMON-COUNCIL

OF THE

CITY OF NORWICH;

This SERMON is with the greatest Respect INSCRIBED,

By their obliged,

and obedient,

humble Servant,

JOHN GREENE.

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1 TIMOTHY II. 2.

---That we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.

ST. PAUL, at his departure into Macedonia, had appointed Timothy—whom he ſtiles "his own ſon in the Faith"—to preſide over the Churches of Epheſus and the neighbouring Provinces. Earneſtly ſolicitous for the ſucceſs of his Miniſtry, he addreſſes two Epiſtles to the new Biſhop, which ſhew that—'though "abſent in body yet he was preſent with him in ſpirit:" And in which the warm affection of the generous Friend is exceeded only by the honeſt zeal of the chriſtian Apoſtle.

THE ſituation of Timothy at Epheſus was, on many accounts, at that time extremely nice and critical; expoſed on the one hand to the bigotted Malice of the Jewiſh Zealots, and on the other to the

the Reſentment and Perſecution of the Roman Governor. We know what Inſtructions might have been expected under ſuch Circumſtances from an intriguing Head of a certain modern religious Order, who have diſgraced the name of their bleſſed Maſter by which they are blaſphemouſly diſtinguiſhed:—We may eaſily gueſs too at the Directions which a Prime Miniſter of the ambitious and cruel Impoſtor of the Eaſt would have given to an Agent in whom he might have confided, on ſuch an occaſion. An artful, ſecret, poiſonous Sedition would probably have convulſed the State, from the ſuggeſtions of the former:—An open, daring Rebellion would have deluged it with Blood under the Auſpices of the latter. Let us now hear the Inſtructions delivered by an Apoſtle of the mild and merciful JESUS. *I exhort*, ſaith He, *that firſt of all, Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men: For Kings, and for all that are in Authority: that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* The Duty here enjoined is eaſy—and intelligible to the meaneſt Capacity: as agreeable to the dictates of Nature, as to the genuine ſpirit of the Goſpel: And the Neceſſity and Importance of it will be readily

readily admitted by All who reflect on the Intereſt which every Individual muſt have in the Good of the Community, and more eſpecially in the Welfare of thoſe who are at the Head of it:—whoſe Hearts are in the Rule and Governance of that ſupreme Providence by which alone *Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice.*

If with ſome learned and judicious Critics we alter the preſent Punctuation of the ſecond Verſe, by rejecting the Stop which is placed at the beginning of it, the words of the Text will receive a ſenſe—not foreign indeed from that which they now may very well bear; but perhaps rather more lively and expreſſive. We ſhall then be directed to *pray for all Men* in general;—in particular *for Kings and all who are placed in Authority*, for this End, namely, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* Viewed in this light—the words before us exhibit a plain but full account of the great End and Deſign of Civil Government: And at the ſame time that they expreſsly point out the particular Duty of thoſe who are intruſted with the Adminiſtration of it,—they neceſſarily imply the Duty of the People who are ſubject to it.

If we conſult the wretched ſlaves of arbitrary, deſpotic Power, we ſhall be told that all Government is abſolute Monarchy:---that all Princes have a *divine Right* to exerciſe an unlimited Authority over---and to exact a paſſive, non-reſiſting Obedience from their Subjects,---let their Laws, or their own Conduct, be what they will. If ſuch were really the Caſe, Men would of all God's Creatures be moſt miſerable: Life and Thraldom would be entered upon together: and they could never quit the one, 'till they parted with the other. The Advocates however for this Doctrine are as contemptible in their reaſoning, as they are in their Principles: no wonder indeed they ſhould: ſince Slavery---and above all a voluntary Slavery, will naturally debaſe the Mind, and obſcure the Underſtanding. Reaſon and Scripture ſpeak a different language: and both unite their friendly voice in contradicting theſe abject, theſe unnatural, and thank God! we can now add---theſe antiquated and exploded Tenets. The general ſenſe of Mankind will tell us, that all Men are born free; and that Government is founded on mutual Compact: on the Conſent of a Community to ſubmit to ſuch Laws, and to unite in ſupporting ſuch a Syſtem of Polity, as might beſt anſwer the ends of a friendly

Society,

Society, and render both Life and Property more ſafe, agreeable, and permanent. What particular Form of Government Men ſhould adopt for theſe purpoſes, was left entirely to themſelves. The natural Principle however of all, in their original Intention, muſt have been the Safety and Good of the *whole:* and That Form muſt certainly be allowed to be the beſt, the Conſtitution and Adminiſtration of which moſt effectually provide for the *common Good.*

THE great deſign of our Creator, was, the Happineſs of his Creatures: And, as from their frame and endowments they can never be happy but in Society, nor Society ſubſiſt without Government; ſo we may truly ſay, that Government —in This ſenſe—is the appointment of God: and that the various Degrees and Powers that are in it, *are ordained of God.* They undoubtedly have their Power from Him; But then, be it remembered that it is only the Power of doing Good: for, with due reverence be it ſpoken, God himſelf hath no other Power: and no delegated Authority can exceed that of the Principal from whom it is derived. Hence we ſee it is the Honor, the Privilege, and the Intereſt of ſuch as are intruſted with the

the executive part of Government, to promote the glory of God, in whoſe ſtead they are placed, by promoting the peace and good order of thoſe who are under their Care; by encouraging the virtuous; by puniſhing the vicious; and by impartially rendering unto all Men according to their Works. This is the noble deſign of Civil Government: and however difficult and dangerous even an Attempt to act agreeably to it may be in other Countries, where the Will of the Prince is the Law of the Subject; yet it is neither difficult nor dangerous to perſue and accompliſh it in our own. Such is the happy, the envied ſtate of our admirable Conſtitution, that the Authority of the King himſelf is bounded by the LAWS: that theſe Laws are KNOWN: and that we owe no Obedience to any but what we have virtually aſſented to, either by ourſelves, or by our Repreſentatives.

IT is the glory of a Britiſh King to be ſtiled THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF A FREE PEOPLE: a Title of much higher dignity than any of thoſe inflated and extravagant Appellations which the haughty Tyrants of the Eaſt extort from their miſerable Vaſſals: A Title which, at the ſame time that it adds a luſtre to the Crown,—reflects

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an honor on thoſe who are the Deputies and Vicegerents of it's Power.—They are the appointed Executors of the Laws, *under our Sovereign Lord the King*:—Let them hear then their duty from the KING OF KINGS, delivered by the Mouth of his Servant David, with an inſpired ſublimity of Expreſſion, worthy both the Speaker and the Subject. * *David the Son of Jeſſe ſaid, and the Man who was raiſed on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael ſaid:—The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue; the God of Iſrael ſaid, the Rock of Iſrael ſpake to me:—He that ruleth over Men, muſt be* JUST, *ruling in the Fear of God.* The Perfection of Juſtice is the peculiar Attribute of the Deity: and is to be expected only from Him in whom are hidden all the Treaſures of Wiſdom, Knowledge, and Power. But it is the duty of Man to imitate his Creator: it is more eſpecially incumbent on Him, who is veſted with any ſhare in the public Adminiſtration of Juſtice, to act like the Repreſentative of Heaven, by ſtanding forth the Patron of Virtue, the Scourge of Vice:---by ſupporting and encouraging the ſober and induſtri-

ous;

* 2 Sam. XXIII. 1, 2, 3.

ous; and by impartially correcting the idle, the profligate, and the wicked. The beſt Laws, without a due execution, become a dead letter; and ſerve to harden thoſe Offenders whom they were deſigned to puniſh and amend. The RULER therefore who is not a Terror to evil Works, is, in effect, an Encourager of them:---And He that is not againſt Vice, is for it. He cannot poſſibly *bear the Sword in vain:* And if it hurt not the lawleſs and diſobedient, it muſt, in the end, give a fatal Wound to thoſe whom it ought to protect and defend.---But then,---Vigilance over the Conduct of others, will but ill ſuit with Inattention to his own. Like a City built upon a Hill, He is conſpicuous to All,--He is particularly obſerved by Many: His Actions are a kind of Rule and Standard to thoſe over whom he preſides: and therefore *Sin*, in thoſe, who are placed in this exalted Station, *becometh exceeding ſinful.* A virtuous Uniformity of Conduct can alone ſecure to him the full dignity of his Office:--when the MAN counteracts the MAGISTRATE, both Characters will ſink into general Contempt. HE alone is worthy to rule over others-- who can properly rule Himſelf: whoſe own Example is a living Comment on the Laws he is bound to enforce: and who in his public and private Conduct ſhews,

that

that he is ever attentive to that ſtrict and ſolemn Account which he muſt one day render of Both, at the awful Tribunal of Chriſt.

They that exerciſe Authority over the Gentiles--- ſaith our bleſſed Saviour--- *are called* BENEFACTORS;--- alluding to the Vanity of ſome wicked Princes of thoſe Times, who, with a kind of faſhionable Affectation, aſſumed to themſelves this Title; And thus added a taunting Inſult to an oppreſſive Tyranny. Vice generally ſolicits---and too often receives the honors which are due to Virtue: ---For undoubtedly this amiable Title is not more juſtly due to Any than to thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by an impartial Adminiſtration of Juſtice; and are, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the Words, the Friends and Benefactors of the Community. Hence Reaſon, and Honor, and Gratitude, and every *Cord that can draw a Man*, muſt ſtrongly attach our Affections to thoſe whoſe public Station is, in fact, a public Benefit. Every good Man is bound by Duty and Intereſt to ſupport, aſſiſt, and reverence a good Magiſtrate. Scripture confirms and enforces this Obligation: It requires us to offer up our Prayers and Thankſgivings for their Welfare;

Welfare; to be ſubject to them---*not only for Wrath, but alſo for Conſcience' Sake*; —— not ſo much from a ſlaviſh dread of Puniſhment, as from a generous regard for our Duty. The Apoſtles never omitted any opportunity of enjoining their Converts a Reſpect and Submiſſion to the civil Authority of the Government under which they lived: They repetedly *put them in Mind to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers:* ——*to obey Magiſtrates:* ——*to render to All their Dues; Tribute to whom Tribute is due; Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom; Fear to whom Fear; Honor to whom Honor.* It is impoſſible that the moſt vigilant Attention, or the moſt unbiaſſed Juſtice in a Magiſtrate ſhould produce their deſired effect, unleſs the People act in concert with him, and contribute Their Part towards ſecuring to themſelves *a quiet and peaceable Life. He that ruleth muſt do it with diligence:* --- But let thoſe who are under his Authority remember that *He who ruleth well, is,* in the Apoſtle's Opinion, *worthy of double Honor*; and no one who deſerves the Name of a Man or a Chriſtian will refuſe to pay it him. The ſafety and welfare of the Community require this reſpectful Subordination: And Submiſſion to the higher Powers is neceſſary,--- not only for the

Lord's

Lord's ſake---but for our own. The firſt of theſe reaſons will be ſufficient to influence the Conduct of every one who preſerves any regard to Decency and Religion: The latter is addreſſed to the groſſer feelings of thoſe who are deaf to every thing but what relates to their private Advantage. Both would admit of the ſtrongeſt enforcement, were any additional Arguments on this Point requiſite, or even proper: And they can be neither requiſite ---nor perhaps proper in a Place, where a general good Order and Regularity bear honorable teſtimony to the Vigilance of the Magiſtracy, and to the decent Submiſſion of the People.---It is only from a Concurrence of theſe Qualities in Both, that the former can hope to meet with a chearful Obedience to their Authority, or the latter to reap the benefits of a legal defence and protection. From this mutual attention to their reſpective duties, All of Us have already enjoyed---and have the faireſt Proſpect of ſtill enjoying *a quiet and peaceable Life:* But are we deſirous that this Bleſſing ſhould be fixed and laſting?---ſhould be extended to our Poſterity, and continued to ourſelves even beyond the Grave?---Let us remember that we muſt lead this Life *in all Godlineſs and Honeſty:* For, without a ſtrict regard to our religious

religious and moral duty, all earthly Quiet is little better than a dangerous Lethargy: It may ſtupify and deceive us for a time; but the Diſeaſe will burſt forth with ten-fold Virulence in the end. Irreligion and Licentiouſneſs, Vice and Miſery, are naturally connected: They are Companions which may perhaps -- at leaſt in appearance --be ſeparated for a while; but their final Union is unavoidable, and will continue for ever. At the ſame time therefore that we ſhun the Paths which are pointed out to us by theſe deceitful Guides, be it our care to perſue thoſe which lead to Comfort and Security, both temporal and eternal: To act upon ſuch Principles as our Religion preſcribes, our own Hearts muſt approve, and our God will reward. By theſe Means only can we expect to enjoy any real Compoſure or Satisfaction, even in this ſhort and fluctuating ſtate: --- On theſe Terms alone have we any reaſon to hope for Admittance into that Region of Bliſs, where *the Lord Himſelf is King*,--- And where All is *Peace, Quietneſs, and Aſſurance for ever.*

FINIS.

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